

Raj Anand writes to the editor of *The Globe and Mail* regarding Quebec's Bill 21 and the recent dismissal of a teacher for wearing a hijab

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By

Raj Anand, WeirFoulds partner and former Chief Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights Commission wrote a letter to the editor of *The Globe and Mail*, published on December 15, 2021.

The letter was in response to an incident that took place earlier this month in which an elementary school teacher was removed from her teaching position in Chelsea, Quebec because she wears a hijab. The dismissal was based on Quebec's Bill 21, under which certain government employees in positions of authority cannot wear religious symbols at work.

Raj draws comparisons to the experiences of his own family and the similar discrimination that his mother faced in 1959 as an elementary school teacher in Quebec.

"In 1956, in the last years of Maurice Duplessis, my parents, brother and I immigrated from India and settled in Montreal. With two university degrees, my mother achieved a teaching position in elementary school.

In 1959, she received a letter from the Quebec government requiring her to attest to her religion. There were two options: Christian and Jewish. She could confirm neither one. She lost her job.

Our mother persisted and three years later joined what would become Concordia University, beginning a 35-year career as one of Canada's first female mathematicians. As part of the Quiet Revolution in the 1960s, Quebec eventually changed its laws to prohibit such discrimination as our mother faced. But as of 2019, we are back where we came from.

Plus ça change."

To read the letter in *The Globe and Mail*, please click [here](#).

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